

[ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER NO. 323, March 21, 1997]

IMPOSING THE PENALTY OF SIX MONTHS SUSPENSION FROM SERVICE ON MENANDRO GALENZOGA, CHIEF OF MISSION II, DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

This refers to the 02 May 1996 administrative case filed by the Department of Foreign Affairs against Mr. Menandro Galenzoga, Chief of Mission II, based on the complaints of Consul Grace Escalante, Foreign Service Officer II, Mr. Socrates Lucila, Foreign Service Staff Officer II, and Ms. Gaudiosa Garcia, Foreign Service Staff Employee III, all of the Philippine Embassy in Cairo.

Ambassador Galenzoga was charged for dishonesty, conduct grossly prejudicial to the best interest of the service and violation of the Civil Service Rules and government accounting and auditing rules and regulations.

Specifically, Ambassador Galenzoga was charged for the following a) receiving \$17,000.00 in the form of cash advances for per diems and allowances; and b) duty-free importation of two Mercedes Benz cars in conspiracy with embassy employees who were not entitled thereto.

On 08 May 1996, the Board of Foreign Service Administration (BFSA) created an Investigating Committee to hear the case. In the four hearings conducted, Ambassador Galenzoga chose not to be represented by counsel.

On 09 August 1996, Ambassador Galenzoga was found guilty of dishonesty and conduct grossly prejudicial to the interest of the service.

On the first charge, the Committee applied the Rules on Travel, as provided in Executive Order No. 248, series of 1995, and implemented by Department Orders 30-95 and 32-95. Under the rules, Foreign Service Officers and employees, whenever authorized to travel to Manila, are entitled to travel rates of three hundred pesos per one full stay in Manila, not to exceed one (1) month, or, when approved by the Secretary, not to exceed three (3) months. The Committee found that, granting the respondent stayed in Manila for forty-one days, he should only be entitled to twelve thousand (P12,000.00) pesos or US\$477.00 cash advance. The \$17,000.00 cash advance he received was clearly over and beyond the allowable limit and is considered unconscionable and unlawful expenditure under Section 166 of the Government Accounting and Auditing Manual.

On the second charge, the Committee found that two casual employees of the embassy, namely, Messrs. Edio and Mustapha were able to bring to Egypt two (2) Mercedes Benz cars which, with the connivance of the respondent, were imported free of duties and taxes. Such activity would have easily caused embarrassment to the Mission, and the Philippine government, had the same been discovered by the host country.